

Science, Service, Stewardship



Proposed 2012 Atlantic bluefin tuna quota specifications

Highly Migratory Species Management Division
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Need for action

- BFT quota specifications for 2012 are necessary to adjust the U.S. baseline BFT quota to account for any underharvest or overharvest from 2011
 - Preliminary information indicates an underharvest of the 2011 adjusted BFT quota
- Through the annual specifications, NMFS would proactively account for anticipated 2012 dead discards to ensure that landings and dead discards do not exceed the adjusted 2012 U.S. quota



2010 ICCAT WBFT Recommendation -- Quotas

	For 2011 (Rec. 10-03)	For 2012 (Rec. 10-03)
W. Atl. TAC	1,750 mt	1,750 mt
U.S. baseline quota	923.7 mt	923.7 mt
Total U.S. quota (including 25 mt for bycatch in NED)	948.7 mt	948.7 mt



ICCAT WBFT Recommendation -- Other Provisions

- Limit carryforward of underharvest to 10% of a country's quota
 - 10% of 2011 U.S. total quota (948.7) = 94.9 mt
- Limit the harvest of BFT < 115 cm (school BFT) to no more than 10% of a country's quota, on average, over 2011-2012 period
 - 10% of 948.7 is 94.9 mt/year or 189.7 over the 2-year period
 - ~58 mt of school BFT landed in 2011 (preliminary data)



2012 Domestic Implications – Accounting for Dead Discards

- U.S. BFT quota is inclusive of dead discards
- BFT landings data and BFT dead discard estimates must be reported to ICCAT annually
- Best available estimate is the 2010 estimate of 122.3 mt from pelagic longline vessels
- When the 2011 BFT dead discard estimate is available (late spring 2012), it will be used for preparation of the final specifications and reported to ICCAT along with total 2011 BFT landings

	2011			
Category	Baseline Quota	Adjusted Quota	Landings & LL dead discards	% of Adjusted Quota
<i>General</i>	435.1	485.1*	460.7	95 (106 of Base)
<i>Harpoon</i>	36	36	29.3	81
<i>Longline</i>	99.8	86.1	74.1 (196.4 if include dead discards)	86 (228 if include dead discards)
North	29.9	24.4	31.8	130.3
NED	25	25	6.2	24.8
South	44.9	36.7	36.1	98
dead discards			122.3 (proxy)	
<i>Trap</i>	0.9	0.9	0	0
<i>Purse Seine</i>	171.8	171.8	0	0
<i>Angling</i>	182	182	181.6	100
School	94.9	94.9	57.5	61
Large school/ Small medium	82.9	82.9	119.1**	144
Large medium/ Giant ("Trophy")	4.2	4.2	5	119
<i>Reserve</i>	23.1	20.5*	0.6	3
TOTAL (Landings)	948.7	982.4*** 1,043.6	746.3	76 72
<i>TOTAL (incl. DD)</i>	<i>948.7</i>	<i>982.4</i> <i>1,043.6</i>	<i>868.6</i>	<i>88</i> <i>83</i>

Data for the 2011 fishing year are as of January 18, 2012.

* Reflects transfer of 50 mt from the Reserve category (finalized as 70.5 mt in 76 FR 39019, July 5, 2011) to the General category effective November 6, 2011 (76 FR 69137, November 8, 2011)

** Note that Angling category landings of small medium BFT were prohibited, April 2 – December 31, 2011 (76 FR 18416, April 4, 2011)

*** 2011 Adjusted Quota published in 76 FR 39019, July 5, 2011 = 982.4, reflecting NMFS' accounting for half of the estimated dead discards at the beginning of the fishing year, with the remainder to be accounted for at year-end; *U.S. Adjusted Quota for ICCAT accounting purposes=1,043.6*



Unharvested 2011 quota

- Based on the best, currently available landings data and estimate of dead discards (2010 proxy), NMFS anticipates an underharvest of the 2011 U.S. adjusted BFT quota of approximately 175 mt (1,043.6 mt – 868.6 mt)
- Per the ICCAT WBFT recommendation, the maximum amount of unharvested 2011 quota that the United States may carry forward to 2012 is 94.9 mt



Proposed Rule Overview

- Account for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the dead discard estimate of 122.3 mt up front, from the Longline subquota
- Apply $\frac{1}{2}$ of the amount of underharvest that is allowed to be carried forward ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 94.9=47.5 mt) to the Longline category and maintain the other $\frac{1}{2}$ in the Reserve category, for an adjusted Reserve quota of 70.5 mt
- Proposed Longline subquota:
74.8 mt baseline quota - 61.2 mt dead discards + 47.5 mt underharvest
= 61.1 mt adjusted quota



Proposed Rule Overview

- Would provide full 2012 baseline quotas to all directed categories
- Would provide maximum flexibility in accounting for 2012 landings and dead discards
- May provide further incentive for pelagic longline fishermen to reduce those interactions that may result in dead discards


Proposed 2012 Atlantic bluefin tuna quotas and quota specifications (in metric tons)

Category (% share of baseline quota)	Baseline Allocation for 2011 and 2012 (per 2010 ICCAT Recommendation and Consolidated HMS FMP allocations)	2012 Quota Specifications		
		Dead Discard Deduction (1/2 of 2010 proxy of 122.3 mt)	2011 Underharvest to Carry Forward to 2012 (94.9 mt total)	Adjusted 2012 Fishing Year Quota
Total (100)	923.7*			957.4
Angling (19.7)	182.0 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 94.9 Reserve 17.6 North 36.5 South 40.8 LS/SM 82.9 North 39.1 South 43.8 Trophy 4.2 North 1.4 South 2.8			182.0 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> School 94.9 Reserve 17.6 North 36.5 South 40.8 LS/SM 82.9 North 39.1 South 43.8 Trophy 4.2 North 1.4 South 2.8
General (47.1)	435.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 23.1 Jun-Aug 217.6 Sept 115.3 Oct-Nov 56.6 Dec 22.6			435.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> Jan 23.1 Jun-Aug 217.6 Sept 115.3 Oct-Nov 56.6 Dec 22.6
Harpoon (3.9)	36.0			36.0
Purse Seine (18.6)	171.8			171.8
Longline (8.1)	74.8 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 29.9 NED 25.0* South 44.9	-61.2	+47.5	61.1 <u>SUBQUOTAS:</u> North (-NED) 24.4 NED 25.0* South 36.7
Trap (0.1)	0.9			0.9
Reserve (2.5)	23.1		+47.4	70.5

*25-mt ICCAT set-aside to account for bycatch of BFT in pelagic longline fisheries in the NED. Not included in totals at top of table.



Transitional approach

- NMFS used this method in 2011 as a transitional approach from the method in which the **full** estimate of dead discards was deducted at the beginning of the year
- Appropriate again for 2012 pending development of longer-term management measures, which could include regulatory amendment(s) and/or FMP amendment (Am. 7)
- NMFS may begin to expand data collection programs (including dead discard information) for *all* categories and may revise measures to account for and control discards.



Transitional approach

- In the meantime, management of the BFT fishery continues under the current FMP, implementing regulations, and ICCAT Recommendations
- The proposed action is intended to provide sufficient quota to the Longline category to cover anticipated landings and dead discards while the fleet continues directed fishing operations for swordfish and other tunas
- NMFS anticipates that dead discards in the pelagic longline fishery may be reduced due to continued implementation of the weak hook requirement in the Gulf of Mexico



Public comment requested

IF the final 2011 landings and dead discards information results in a total of greater than 948.7 mt but less than 1,043.6 mt:

- the amount of 2011 underharvest that the United States may carry forward to 2012 would need to be reduced from 94.9 mt accordingly.
- e.g., if the dead discards estimate increases by > 80.1 mt





Public comment requested

In such an event, NMFS could decide to:

- Provide $\frac{1}{2}$ of the available amount (each) to the Longline and Reserve categories
 - If 80 mt is available, 40 mt to Longline and 40 mt to Reserve
- If small (~20 mt), provide entire amount to the Longline or Reserve category
- Allocate the amount in another manner after considering domestic management needs for 2012

(Baseline subquotas for the directed fishing categories and Trap category would be maintained)

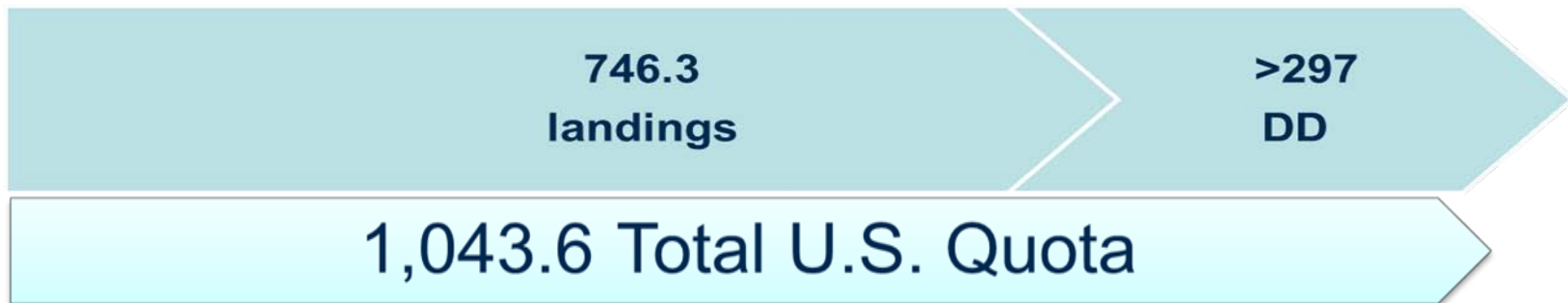
NMFS invites comment on the range of possible allocations of the amount carried forward should that amount be between 0 mt and 94.9 mt



Public comment requested

IF 2011 landings and dead discard estimate > 1,043.6 mt:

- NMFS may need to take further action, consistent with the BFT quota adjustment regulations and with ICCAT Recommendation 10-03, and
- The U.S. BFT quota may be adjusted, consistent with ICCAT recommendations.



Unlikely, as the dead discard estimate would need to be approximately 300 mt, and recently has ranged from 122 to 204 mt. However...



Public comment requested

In that event, NMFS may determine that:

- Reduction of the Longline and/or Reserve subquotas is necessary, or
- The 2012 quota must be reduced, which would affect all category subquotas

NMFS requests comment on the potential adjustment of the final 2012 quota and subquotas to account for potential overharvest of the 2011 adjusted U.S. quota (although unlikely)



General and Angling Category Daily Retention Limits

As in past years, NMFS plans to make daily retention limit adjustments, if and as needed, for the 2012 fishing year via Federal Register notices separate from the final specifications



Timeline for Rulemaking

- Proposed rule to be published in March 2012
- Comment period ends in April 2012
- Dates and locations for public hearings to be announced in a separate document in the Federal Register
- Intend to publish final rule by June 2012



Public Comments due April 2012

- You may submit comments, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2012-0048," by any one of the following methods:
- Federal Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>
(Preferred method)
- Mail: Sarah McLaughlin
HMS Management Division
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
- Fax: (978) 281-9340
- ***Please do not submit electronic comments to NMFS staff***



Comments? Questions?

- For further information on this rulemaking or Atlantic tunas management, contact Brad McHale or Sarah McLaughlin at (978) 281-9260
- For information on other HMS issues, contact the HMS Management Division at (301) 427-8503